



NAVAJO NATION DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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ARRA homes inspected by Housing Improvement Program



LaVerne Benally, program manager for the Housing Improvement Program, speaks with Alice Willie of Pinon. Willie exited the hot confines of her hogan to walk the perimeter of her new home and inspect the interior with HIP staff on June 15. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-Some of the poorest elders in the Navajo Nation now have homes.

Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act built 22 new homes in all five agencies of the Navajo Nation.

ARRA funds were funneled through the U.S. Department of Interior to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and finally, to the Navajo Nation Housing Improvement Program.

Arbin Mitchell, director of Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, said the new homes improved the quality of life for Navajo families.

"These new homes were built to meet the needs of the elderly homeowners," Mitchell said. "Now, they have a house that will not

only shelter them but keep them relatively comfortable."

The NNHIP is currently executing final inspections for all homes built with ARRA funds, from June 15, 2011 through July 8.

Darrell Jimson, ARRA Planner and Estimator, is on the road for the next month with his construction crew, turning over keys to new homeowners.

Jimson said his crew is also inspecting the homes and fixing any issues that are uncovered.

On June 15, Pinon residents Charlie and Helen Begay received keys to the new two-bedroom, one bathroom home. The couple was appreciative and thanked the construction crew for work on the new home over the past six months.

Speaking in Navajo, Charlie Begay said the new home was a major improvement over the couple's previous home.

Lead carpenter Timothy Tsosie said he ensured the construction went according to the blueprints.

"We should build more homes like this for our elders," Tsosie said.

Alice Willie of Pinon exited the hot conditions of her hogan to walk the perimeter of her new home and inspected the interior with the construction crew.

Willie said she was thankful for the new home but became emotional when she spoke of her old home that sheltered her family.

Her new home features partial disability amenities such as wide doorways to See NAVAJO on page 8

FAMILIES RECEIVING ARRA FUNDED HOMES

Chinle Agency

Charlie and Helen Begay - Pinon

Alice Willie - Pinon

Billy and Eva Yazzie - Hard Rock

Betty Burbank - Blue Gap

John and Nellie Lee - Rocky Ridge

Eastern Agency

Mary Chavez - Nageezi

Henry and Helen Hoskie - Naschitti

John and Betty Nez - Mexican Springs

Ft. Defiance Agency

Helen Dalgai - Ganado

Eunice Wauneka - Ft. Defiance

Helen Lynch - Wide Ruins

Jimmie and Helen Bedonie - Teesto

Thomas Begay - Ganado

Author Roan - Klageetoh

Northern Agency

David and Betty Charley - Two Grey Hills

Esther Lee - Beclabito

Abbie Y. Stoney - Rock Point

Western Agency

Frank and Mary Tsosie - Dennehotso

Grace A. Yazzie - Shonto

James Kinlacheeny - Chilchinbeto

Carol Welch - Tonalea

Cecil and Betty Boone - Kayenta



Charlie and Helen Begay of Pinon proudly display their certificate of homeownership. The couple received keys to their new two-bedroom, one bathroom home on June 15. They are pictured here with staff from HIP and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Message from the NND CD Director

Yá'at'ééh!

Welcome to the second edition of the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development newsletter. Much has happened in the month since our last issue, particularly with the Local Governance Act and reporting to our oversight committee, the Resources and Development Committee.

This issue features stories at the heart of our division on projects that have been in development for years and in some instances, decades. You can read

about the new homes built for the "neediest of the needy" with funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. President Barack Obama's initiative made a positive impact here on the Navajo Nation.

Community Development has been very fortunate in receiving assistance from a multitude of agencies and private sector sources. One of the most significant is the Public Access Computer Hardware Upgrade Grant funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Read how they helped us establish a computer network for our 110 Navajo chapters since 2000.

Navajo chapters have received much assistance from the division and we continue our push to certify more chapters in accordance with the Local Governance Act. White Rock Chapter, the smallest chapter on the Navajo Nation, said LGA certification has been a blessing for their community, providing newfound accountability and authorities. You can find their story here.

Because of the remote loca-

tions of many chapters, technology has been essential in communicating with other chapters and the central government. To that end, our division continues to provide technical assistance and training to help chapters expand their skills. Read about our most recent technology training with the chapters at San Juan College.

Without a doubt, the greatest instrument in the hands of chapters is LGA certification and the Five Management System. Not only is it required for all

chapters under Navajo Nation law, but it also provides accountability and prevention of financial mismanagement. We reported to our oversight committee about the LGA certification process and implementation of the FMS.

After our initial reporting, we were asked to return later in the month to provide a full-scale report on the proposed LGA amendments and what they mean for the Navajo Nation. We were happy to have the support of the Department of Justice and the Office of the Auditor General, both of which reported alongside us on the importance of the amendments to the LGA.

It was another busy month for the division and the stories here are just a sliver of what we're doing out there in our continuing mission to promote viable communities through Navajo values. We hope you enjoy.

Ahe'hee.

Arbin Mitchell, Director
Navajo Nation Division of
Community Development



NAVAJO NATION DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Navajo Nation chapters are guided through the maze of the digital age

WINDOW ROCK-The Gates Foundation developed an advanced empire on the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said the connectivity of the Navajo Nation chapters is a sign of the times.

"We are moving in a new direction and technology is uniting Navajo communities with the rest of the world," Shelly said.

Arbin Mitchell, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director, said Bill and Melinda Gates pulled Navajo chapters into the digital age.

"The Gates Foundation provided Navajo communities with technological infrastructure most cities and towns take for granted," Mitchell said. "Our Navajo chapters appreciate this major step into the modern world."

Chapter houses are all connected on the wide area network of NNDCD, through the Internet.

Since the millennium, chapters have served as community libraries and received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The foundation makes grants in three program areas: Global Development, Global Health, and the United States. For the United States, the mission to improve education includes the focus area of U.S. Libraries, via the Public Access Computer Hardware Upgrade Grant.

Norbert Nez, computer operations manager for the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, said chapter houses flourished with technological advances in the last decade, thanks to the PACHUG funds.

In May 2011, NNDCD closed out the support and sustainability grant portion of the PACHUG, known as the closeout grant. An extension was granted and budget modification completed in February 2010.

The division closed out the funding with the creation of an online file management system,

SAS tracking system, and server hardware and software upgrades.

The Gates Foundation's Native Americans Access to Technology program funded NNDCD \$6,632,615 since 2000 to provide chapter houses with computers and Internet access. The foundation provided communities with two to four computers per chapter house.

"Since 2000, the Gates Foundation has made several grants to the Navajo Nation," Nez said. "The Division of Community Development took on the responsibility for all these grants."

The Gates Foundation has worked with 43 tribes in Ariz., Colo., New Mex., and Utah to provide computers, peripherals, training and technical support for a total investment in excess of \$9.6 million, according to a news release from the Gates Foundation.

Denise Copeland, principal archaeologist for the Capital Improvement Office, said the grants provided by the foundation have increased the knowledge of technology at the community level.

"In the beginning, most of the chapters were afraid of computers. I don't think they have that perception anymore," Copeland said.

Nez and Copeland formed the Navajo Technology Empowerment Center in March 2005 to utilize electronic solutions to provide support and training to the chapters.

Aided by principal information systems technician Sylvia Jordan and information systems technician Roymond Willie, the NavTEC team laid the backbone and improved information services over the years.

Both technicians joined the division when the Gates Foundation funded the PACHUG Replacement Grant in 2006, which addressed the obsolescence of the initial computers purchased in 2000.

See PACHUG on page 13



Norbert Nez, computer operations manager for Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, said he's seen the rise of technology at the chapter level since 1998. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

NAVAJO CHAPTERS MAKING STRIDES

Neenahnezad Chapter applied for a grant from the McClune Foundation to provide additional computers to sustain public access computing efforts for the community. They received four new computers as a result of the grant.

Huerfano Chapter collaborated with Sacred Wind Communications and successfully applied for a USDA Community Connect grant to provide sustainable Internet access.

Nine other Navajo communities with land in Utah partnered with Cellular One to apply for the community grant and Red Mesa and Navajo Mountain were the two chapters that received grant funding.

Black Mesa Chapter teamed up with the Air Force to receive a grant of public access computers. They built upon their Gates Foundation computers and formed a computer lab for their community.

Ramah Chapter received funds from USDA to build out additional Internet access and telecommunications services for their community.

New Mexico chapters have worked with the state through the Internet to the Hogans project to build out of telecommunications towers and high speed access to Internet resources in Albuquerque.

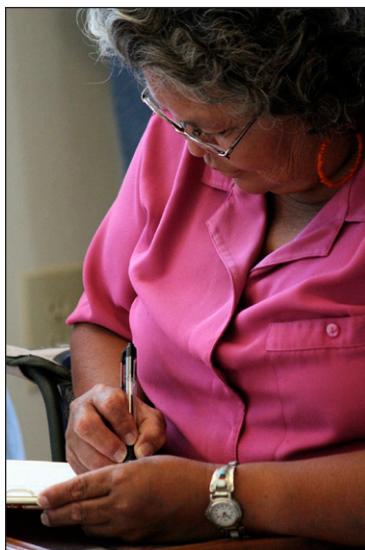
ARRA final inspections open homes to elders



Alice Willie of Pinon said her new home is beautiful. Willie lives alone in the vast expanse of the Pinon community, miles away from the nearest paved road. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Housing Improvement Program Manager LaVerne Benally holds the photo of Hoskie and Helen Henry of Naschitti. The Henrys passed away before they could see their new home. Their daughter Debbie is now a new homeowner. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Left, Nellie Lee of Rocky Ridge, Ariz. listens to instructions on the care and maintenance of her new home. Right, Debbie Henry of Naschitti signs new homeownership papers during final inspections on June 23. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



This unidentified Navajo construction worker welds the finishing touches on hand rails for the front entrance ramp of Billy and Eva Yazzie of Hard Rock. All 22 homes built with ARRA funding feature accessibility options, including fully accessible showers. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



The new two-bedroom, one bathroom home of Charlie and Helen Begay of Pinon. The new home was constructed with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Total construction costs for home amounted to \$107,045 and features a wood stove, wide doorways, lowered windows and counter tops. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

White Rock Chapter lauds LGA certification



White Rock Chapter President Lucinda Henry said Local Governance Act certification and the use of the Five Management System was crucial in the turnaround of the chapter's financial accounting. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WHITE ROCK-Arbin Mitchell, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director, said Local Governance Act certification is the law and will help chapters become more self-sufficient in terms of streamlining a lot of the approval processes.

LGA certified chapters are able to approve home site leases, pass ordinances such as taxation and alternative forms of government, and execute contracts.

"When people ask does LGA certification work, my simple answer is yes," Mitchell said. "The chapters right now can run a balance sheet. The Five Management System we have is up-to-date and we are making significant headway on the issue of accountability."

White Rock Chapter President Lucinda Henry said LGA certification is working for her community, creating an atmosphere of fiscal accountability.

In 2009, Henry took over the reigns for the chapter and found out it was in a state of disarray: missing reports, financial numbers not balancing out.

"At that time, my chapter was not really doing a good job," Henry said.

Personnel and financial mismanagement were an issue.

Felix McDonald, accountant with the Eastern Agency Local Governance Support Center, said

the previous chapter administration left chapter finances in a state of mediocrity.

"We found a lot of mis-posting and some of the financial documents were not even completed. Cash receipts were not being reported," McDonald said.

He said that the LGSC reported the findings from the monitoring and within three months, there were personnel changes.

At the end of 2009, the chapter coordinator opted for the early retirement package and left. A few months later in 2010, the office specialist resigned.

Faced with two vacant positions Henry decided to call Nancy Brown back to duty for the chapter. Brown worked for the chapter as a volunteer first, before getting hired on permanently.

Filling the administrative assistant position was Tabitha Harrison, who transferred from the chapter of Nageezi, where she worked toward chapter certification.

"I wanted somebody that was trying to get their chapter certified, somebody that knew what they were doing," Henry said. "My goal was to get the chapter certified within one year."

McDonald commended the work of Harrison and said she knew her finances in and out.

"When she transferred, she put the finances back together

from the previous year and then FY 2010, which was the current budget," McDonald said.

Working together, the team was determined to straighten out the accounting. By April 2010, White Rock finally knew where they were financially.

What they uncovered was money owed to the Internal Revenue Service and Navajo Nation Tax Commission, which were paid.

As things fell into place, financial reporting was in order and accepted by the LGSC.

Chapter staff busied themselves with inserting policies, procedures and forms that had to be done in the name of White Rock Chapter. They held several meetings and strategized on how to address their financial situation to meet the standards of LGA certification.

McDonald said by the first quarter of FY 2011, White Rock was encouraged by Mitchell to use the fast track LGA certification process.

"It was tough, really tough. The previous administration didn't really help the chapter. After they left, it was the best thing that happened," McDonald said.

In July 2010, the chapter began practicing use of the FMS for the required three months, in accordance with LGSC policy.

The FMS defines work for chapters in the areas of account-

ing, personnel, procurement, property and records management.

By Sept. 2010, White Rock submitted its financial records for certification and auditors were called in to review the books.

"He told us that when he opened the folders, the papers didn't attack him," Henry said.

The audit findings were corrected and the biggest finding was the chapter owed money to the Navajo Nation Tax Commission.

Henry took a check to the tax commission the same day and White Rock Chapter was officially certified on Dec. 22, 2010.

"It was exciting, very exciting," Henry said. "It was a very big step for White Rock Chapter. In two years time, it was a big turnaround."

She said other findings were similar to most chapters, mainly the abuse of travel authorizations. The solution was simple and straightforward: get rid of the people that were doing it.

"I couldn't drag that on. It's embarrassing when you see your chapter's name in the paper," Henry said. "Right now, I think LGA certification is working good for White Rock."

As the first chapter in the Eastern Agency to get certified, White Rock maintained a solid footing into 2011, when they See WHITE ROCK on page 13



Few recreational and employment opportunities exist in the vast expanse of the White Rock Chapter. Here, the local basketball court remains vacant. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Technology is communication

Division of Community Development hosts technology training for chapters



Staff from all 110 chapters of the Navajo Nation attended the 2011 Navajo Technology Census Training at San Juan College in Farmington. Training took place on June 28-29, and attendees learned about the Woven Integrated Navajo Data System, Census 2010, and how to use free Google applications for email, calendar planning, documents, and website management. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

FARMINGTON-Navajo chapters convened at the Henderson Fine Arts Center on June 28-29, to attend the 2011 Navajo Technology Census Training.

Hosted by the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, the training was designed to enable chapters to find statistics, take advantage of free online services and utilize the Woven Integrated Navajo Data System.

Arbin Mitchell, director of NNDCD, said technology is a new development for most of Indian Country, while the rest of the country went through their technological surge over a

decade ago.

"I brag about Community Development. I brag about the chapters. I say, 'They have a system, a Five Management System.' When you ask for a file, they'll take it out," Mitchell said. "If you ask Window Rock for a file, it's in a box somewhere behind us."

The division's WIND System allows chapters to post budgets online, track SAS 164 documents, produce capital improvement projects, track projects from authorization through administration, and develop mapping of the Navajo Nation.

The technology section of di-

vision continues to work on new developments for the system, including rural addressing and online file storage for dissemination.

"With technology, you have the power to send things that have already been sent," Mitchell said.

Navajo chapters have a robust set of tools in the WIND System and they are technologically capable of defraying travel costs by communicating online with the central government.

"The chapters can do a budget in minutes and sent it to Dominic Beyal's office," Mitchell said.

He explained the division invested a large sum of money to get the technology in place but in the long run, it is actually saving the Navajo Nation money.

"When we say technology, it's all about cost cutting, meaning you don't have to take your paperwork to Window Rock," Mitchell said. "You save money on travel and you save on time."

Chapters were encouraged to bring their chapter balances to the training, so they could input their balances into the WIND System.

"Hopefully, you're doing a monthly balance during the chapter meetings," Mitchell said.

Other plans were to get the chapters started on their budgets for the new fiscal year.

Unfortunately, the budget information was not yet available from the Navajo Nation Budget and Finance Committee.

The Community Development technology team provided the bulk of the training from the four breakout sessions scheduled both days.

Norbert Nez, computer operations manager for Community Development, provided training on the WIND System, SAS Tracker, Rural Addressing, and RealFile.

He was assisted by Denise Copeland, principal archaeologist for the Capital Improvement Office and MC Baldwin, coordinator for the Rural Addressing

Authority during the training session.

Principal information systems technician Sylvia Jordan and Roymond Willie, Information Systems Technician, provided training on GoToMeeting and Google applications for email, calendar planning, document editing, and website management. Office specialist Melanie James helped with the training.

Program and projects specialist Brenda Holgate presented training on WIND System and the submission of chapter budgets online.

Vickie McIntire, deputy director of the Denver Region of the U.S. Census Bureau, provided 2010 census training alongside tribal coordinator Amadeo Shije.

The duo shared information on how to access statistical information with regard to people and households, business and industry, and geography. Chapters learned the importance of data tools and the American FactFinder, which could update chapter websites with current information.

At present time, there are over 300,000 Navajo Nation tribal members, according to Census 2010.

"Technology is all about information. It's all about information," Mitchell said. "Over 99 percent of what you're looking for can be Googled."

"I always tell folks everything is in front of you," he said.

Mitchell noted the census count information should be used for chapter profiles online, which was previously printed and cost the division a tidy sum of money.

Chapter officials and staff learned much information in the two-day training session and Community Development continues to educate chapters on technological advancements.

Information: www.nndcd.org.

Ft. Defiance Chapter Treaty Days Celebration



On June 2, Roxanne Marianito, fitness specialist for Tsehootsooi Medical Center, said the youth day events during the Ft. Defiance Treaty Day Celebration included tee-ball and softball. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Kids ran the length of the football field, playing flag football and other events. A local disc jockey played music as kids exercised for the day. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Kids pulled their hardest for the Ft. Defiance Chapter's Treaty Day Celebration. The week-long festivities included a parade, barbecue, softball tournament and community gathering for the youth. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



The Youth Day events of the Ft. Defiance Treaty Day Celebration included tug-of-war, flag football, soccer, kick boxing, tee ball and softball. Events took place at Judd Avey Memorial Field in Ft. Defiance. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Left, kids gather and prepare to play flag football. Right, kids learn the finer points of soccer. Staff from Tsehootsooi Medical Center and Dawn of Recovery (Ft. Defiance DBHS) volunteered and hosted Youth Day events. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Left, kids learn the particulars of field hockey. Right, kids had the chance to lace up their gloves and learn kickboxing techniques from fitness specialists Alfrieda Barton and Roxanne Marianito. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



"Honor History, Celebrate Life," was the theme of the Treaty Day Celebration hosted by Ft. Defiance Chapter. Chapter president Ben Bennett said the chapter hosted the event as a part of community outreach. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Navajo elders receive new homes through ARRA funding



Before moving into their new homes, Navajo elders receiving assistance from the Housing Improvement Program lived in homes like this dilapidated hogan in Pinon. Note the plastic covering used when it rained. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Cont. from page 1
accommodate a wheelchair and a spacious kitchen and bathroom to match the same. Low windows, lever door openers and a ramp with railings were also included.

LaVerne Benally, program manager for HIP, said the program has helped a lot of Navajo elders.

"We're building these homes at a cost of \$107,045. It's like an eye opening experience because a lot of these elders never had a home like the ones we built for them," Benally said. "They're so overwhelmed."

Blue Gap resident Betty Burbank also received keys and certificate of home ownership after returning from an afternoon at the Cottonwood Senior Citizens Center.

Burbank was thankful for the new home and said the winters were always a concern. Her new home was sealed against the elements.

Carpenter Aaron Denny worked on all five homes in

the Chinle Agency and said the clients were all very thankful for the new homes.

"Some of the houses that were here before were nothing like these (new homes). It's a big deal for the homeowners," Denny said.

The program will repair any warranty issues on the homes for a period of one year, after which, all repairs will be the responsibility of the homeowner.

The ARRA funding was awarded as a one-time funding in the amount of \$2,355,000. The funding began on Sept 24, 2009 and will end on September 30, 2011.

The NNHIP served the "neediest of the needy" and clients selected met the eligibility requirements of 25 CFR, Part 256,

which defines the terms and conditions under which assistance is given to Indians under the Housing Improvement Program.

Applicants were ranked and provided certificate of Indian blood, evidence of low income, proof of substandard housing,

confirmation they have no other resources for housing, home site lease, elderly or handicap status, and verification they received no assistance since 1986.

On June 16, John and Nellie Lee of Rocky Ridge received their certificate of homeownership and keys to their new home. John Lee was herding sheep and had to return home to sign the necessary paperwork.

The couple said they previously lived in cramped quarters and turned out the lights early each evening, before retiring for the day.

"Now, we have all this space," Nellie Lee said in Navajo.

Archie Becenti, building inspector for HIP, oversaw the completion of all 22 homes, from the ground up. Becenti was also the architect that designed the homes.

Becenti has over 20 years experience in construction, in all phases of the industry. He said the Navajo Nation needs new homes throughout the reservation.

Becenti said, "When (homeowners) signed up for the homes, it was 10 to 15 years ago. They were healthy and by the time their home was built, they're old."

The homes were built on

approved Navajo Nation home sites. The old homes were demolished and the new homes built atop the old site.

Funded by ARRA, the new homes not only changed the lives of the homeowners but also provided work for many working on the project.

The funds gave temporary employment for a workforce of 50-plus Navajo carpenters.

Administrative costs from the \$2.3 million project amounted to 20 percent and the remaining 80 percent was for direct services associated with construction activities.

Administrative costs covered grants management, project management, monitoring, inspections, accounting, procurement and reporting. Direct services included equipment rental, labor costs, building materials and all other construction related services.

Karlene Zajicek, housing program officer for BIA, said the new homes are beautiful.

"I think the elders, the grandmas and grandpas are going to enjoy them," Zajicek said. "The importance is that families are finally receiving and having access to standard, sanitary homes that are warm in the winter and cool in the summer."

"Some of the houses that were here before were nothing like these (new homes)."

Breaking new ground



On June 30, 2011, Tsaille-Wheatfields Chapter broke ground on a new Senior Citizens Center. Speaker Johnny Naize is pictured here with former council delegate Leonard Teller. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Resources and Development Committee report

WINDOW ROCK-The Local Governance Act was enacted on April 8, 1998 and codified under Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code.

The purpose of the LGA is to recognize governance at the local level by granting authority over local matters to the certified chapters.

This includes defining the legislative and executive functions of chapter officials and staff, community decision-making, and responsible governance with accountability.

The LGA is a Navajo Nation law applicable to all chapters.

On June 7, 2011, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development provided a report on proposed LGA amendments to the Resources Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, during their monthly committee meeting.

Stanley Yazzie, deputy director for NNDCD, said there was a need to amend Title 26 after changes occurred at the local, agency, and central levels of government.

"We wanted to give more authority and give more responsibility to the local chapters," Yazzie said.

The reasoning is that by placing more responsibility on the chapter officials, the result should be more accountability.

Gerri Harrison, legislative associate for the division, said there are chapters currently ready for LGA certification.

Harrison said, "We no have Title 2 and you have your authorities. We do have chapters that are ready for certification and they have been approved by the Auditor General."

There are currently 22 certified chapters on the Navajo Nation, which have implemented the Five Management System and are executing their LGA authorities. On deck for certification are Burnham, Birdsprings, Leupp, Teesto and Chilchinbeto.

The Local Governance Support Centers at all five agencies work with chapters and prepare



Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Deputy Director Stanley Yazzie said the Local Governance Act is working and bringing accountability at the chapter level. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

them to become LGA certified, said Raymond Tsosie, programs and projects specialist for NNDCD.

"Out of the 22 LGA certified chapters, we have four that are very proactive. Some of them already did their taxation, business site leasing and alternative forms of government," Tsosie said.

The authorities provided to LGA certified chapters are defined in Title 26, Section 103, Chapter Authority.

Council delegate Leonard Tsosie (Little Water, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Csamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor) questioned if the LGA is working.

"The reason why I say this is because one of the vision of LGA is that all of these certified chapters would go into development at the chapter level. It appears not to be happening," Tsosie said.

He also questioned the priority of LGSC offices to prepare chapters for certification.

Fellow delegate and RDC member Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Ft. Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) echoed similar sentiments.

"One of the problems we have seen in chapters becoming certified is at the administrative level of the chapter," Smith said. "The personal capability of the individual, to be able to deal with the Five Management System.

"It's a complicated process," he added.

RDC Chairwoman Katherine Benally (Dennehotso, Chilchinbito, Kayenta) took things a bit further and said there are no benefits to LGA certification.

"I know that Chilchinbito is one of the communities that's set to be certified. Kayenta is certified and Dennehotso refuses to be certified," Benally said. "Dennehotso said there are no benefits to the communities that get certified."

She said that after certification, chapters would no longer have access to the Navajo Nation services, like Department of Justice and employee benefits.

Before Yazzie was allowed a brief response, Delegate Tsosie motioned to postpone further discussion until the committee's June 20 work session.

"We could spend all day on this thing," Tsosie said.

The committee agreed and NNDCD was asked to return later in the month with responses to the questions posed by the committee and a Powerpoint presentation outlining the certification process.

Yazzie made his closing remarks and focused primarily on Tsosie's question regarding if the LGA was working.

"I strongly believe that it is moving forward, it is working," Yazzie said.

Yazzie cited the work certified chapters have done with business site leasing and home site leasing for their communities. He also mentioned the alternative forms of governance in place.

"It's something that we are moving forward with earnestly because it also brings accountability," Yazzie said. I strongly believe LGA is working, it just needs to be refined."

The committee accepted the report by a vote of 4-0 and the division was instructed to report back on June 20 with a full report on the LGA amendments and certification process.

Information: www.nndcd.org

Local Governance Act

Community Development proposes amendments to achieve accountability



Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director Arbin Mitchell reports to the Navajo Nation Council Resources Development Committee on the proposed amendments to the Title 26, the Local Governance Act. Mitchell said LGA needs to be given a legitimate chance to grow and work for the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-The Navajo Nation Division of Community Development is currently proposing amendments to Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Local Governance Act.

On June 20, 2011, the division presented a full report on the amendments and the certification process for chapters with regard to the Five Management System and Community Land Use Planning to the Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Committee.

NNDCD presented the amendments to the committee alongside the Department of Justice and the Office of the Auditor General.

At present time, there are 22 LGA certified chapters and 93 CLUP certified chapters on the Navajo Nation.

Five chapters are currently on deck for certification and they are Teesto, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tsidii To'ii, Leupp, and Chilchinbeto.

NNDCD Director Arbin Mitchell said the LGA amend-

ments have the underscore and overstrike portion completed and now, review by the RDC and then the NNC remain.

The amendments to the Act are the first of its kind since it was enacted on April 18, 1998.

“When people ask if (LGA) works, my simple answer is yes, it works,”

Mitchell said. “On the federal government side, independence came in 1776 but we still don’t have a perfect government.

“LGA was enacted in 1998 and within a few years, people are questioning if it works,” he added.

Provisions in the LGA amendments include identifying the chapter supervisor and the duties

and responsibilities at the chapter. Another mandate is to have all of the chapters operate on Sage Fund Accounting Software, formerly MIP, which is a nonprofit financial management system.

The title is also proposed to change from LGA to Local Empowerment Act, reflecting the promulgation of certain powers from the central government down to the chapter level.

Perhaps the biggest amendment is the inclusion of read-only capability on chapter bank accounts for the Office of Management and Budget, NNDCD, Local Governance Support Center and the Office of the Controller.

This was designed to prevent

financial mismanagement that has plagued chapters in the past.

“We’ve been meeting with Wells Fargo representatives to view these balances online. That way, the chapters will know that we are also the reviewers on the account,” Mitchell said.

Navajo Nation Auditor General Elizabeth Begay said her office is mandated to review the FMS policies and procedures of chapters and recommend certification to the RDC.

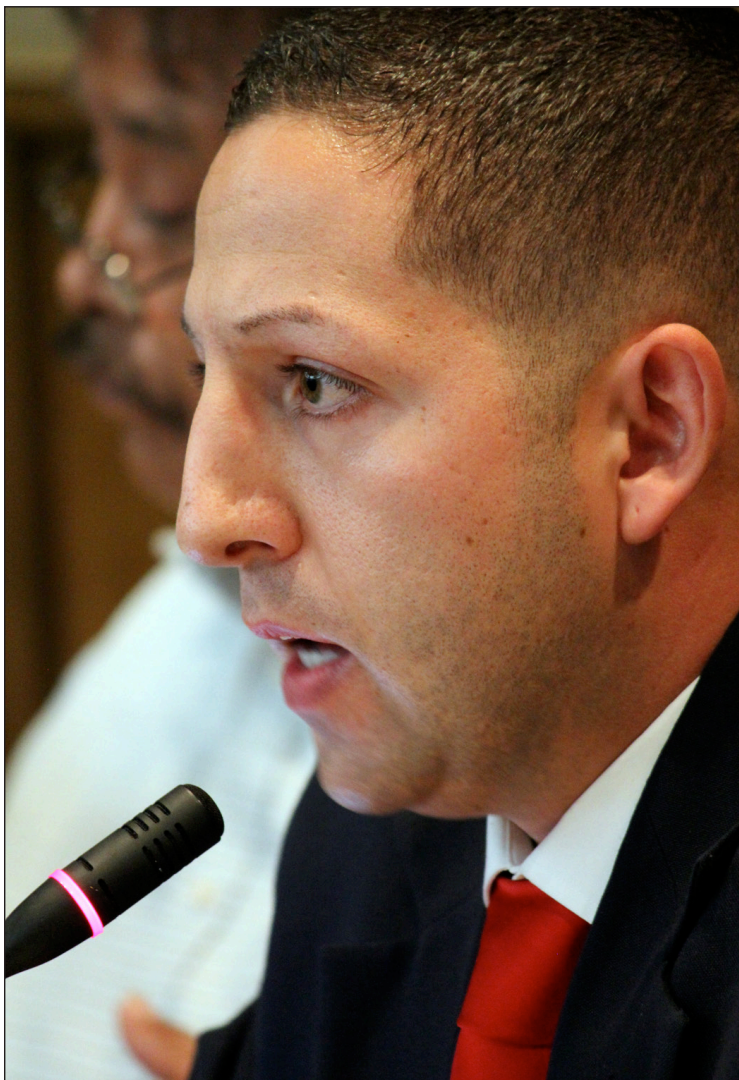
“We obtain an understanding of the internal control policies and procedures established by the chapter’s Five Management System, we evaluate the design effectiveness and determine whether such procedures have been placed in operation,” Begay said.

She said LGA certification is the responsibility of three parties: the chapter, OAG and the RDC.

In early 2010, DOJ finalized a FMS Policies and Procedures Manual for all non-certified. See RESOURCES on page 11

“When people ask if (LGA) works, my simple answer is yes, it works.”

Resources committee receive NNDCD report



Brian Lewis, an attorney for the Department of Justice, said all of the laws be consistent and match across the board, otherwise there will be competing authorities and inconsistencies. Lewis encouraged committee members to include incentives in the proposed amendments. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

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chapters to adopt and implement.

DOJ's standardization of the FMS manual for the chapters have not only brought accountability but also eliminated costs for chapters trying to develop their own manual.

"Based on that standard manual, all of the certified chapters are required to at least implement the policies and procedures for three months," Begay said.

Brian Lewis, an attorney for DOJ, produced the FMS manual shortly after becoming employed with the Navajo Nation on Jan. 19, 2010.

Lewis said it was designed to address two main problems facing DOJ: white collar criminal activity at the chapters and politi-

cal interference.

"The guiding principle in try to make this (LGA) work with these amendments is prioritizing what the chapters need to do and the persons who administer the law," Lewis said.

He noted that people respond to incentives and that as policymakers, council delegates need to keep that concept in mind when creating policies for people to do one thing or not.

"I would say as we go through this, keep in mind that incentives have to be created and this is a balancing act," Lewis said.

Making sure the all the laws are consistent is important, Lewis said, because it could lead to inconsistencies and competing authorities.

"What you need is to do way with the previous Act and certain items will have to be amended, namely Title 5, Title 12 because all of the law must be consistent," Lewis said. "The average lay-person reading the law is going to need some kind of indicator where and how, wherever things are changed."

He said the Act must promote the political integrity, economic security, and the health and welfare of the Navajo Nation.

LGA certified chapters are still a political subdivision of the Navajo Nation and still have access to all of the data, technical assistance and services, he added.

Lewis said, "There's a lot of talk about weaning the chapters off the central government. This is kind of the intent of the law over the long term, to devolve certain authorities like taxation, imminent domain, zoning.

"Becoming LGA certified doesn't cut you off," he added.

Certification doesn't mean absolute autonomy, Lewis explained. Rather, chapters are still bound by the statutes of general applicability.

"You're always going to be subject to those laws. When you become certified, you're still bound by the laws of general applicability that apply to everybody else, all the other programs, divisions," Lewis said.

Mitchell said maintaining transparency within the division and the chapters is the ultimate goal, to keep an atmosphere of fiscal accountability at all levels.

The Woven Integrated Navajo Data System has provided that kind of transparency for the division and was noticed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency when they visited the Navajo Nation.

"FEMA compared Window Rock to the chapters and the FEMA representative said the chapter is better organized because they had all their files in order," Mitchell said.

With the proposed amendments to the LGA and continuing innovations of the WIND System, NNDCD continues to strain for progress at the local levels of governance and accountability.

The five chapters ready for certification will be initiated on July 11, 2011.

Information: www.nndcd.org



Peggy Sue Nez, senior programs and projects specialist for the Chinle Agency Local Governance Support Center, reads the proposed LGA amendments to the Resources Development Committee in Navajo. Seated next to her is Stanley Yazzie, deputy director for NNDCD. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

2011 Navajo Technology Census Training at SJC



Vickie McIntire, deputy director of the Denver Region of the U.S. Census Bureau, shared information with chapters on tapping into census data for their communities. McIntire was joined by Amadeo Shije, tribal coordinator for the Census Bureau. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director Arbin Mitchell said technology is communication. The division's WIND System provides unparalleled transparency in the tribal structure. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Chapter staff were prepared for training and many brought their laptops for servicing by the DCD technology team and to log on to the WIND System. For two days, they learned the benefits of Google's free applications, doing budgets online and how to extract U.S. Census Bureau data for their communities. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



San Juan College's James C. Henderson Fine Arts Center was the site of the 2011 Navajo Technology Census Training hosted by the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development. The division utilizes area colleges because of their technological capabilities and minimal facility charges. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

White Rock Chapter making significant strides

Cont. from page 5

switched over to the Sage Fund Accounting software.

SFA, formerly known as MIP, is the preferred nonprofit financial management solution used to plan and manage budgets, maximize grants, manage human resources, and produce accurate customized reports in minutes.

Henry said the software investment was expensive but well worth it.

White Rock has 362 registered voters but not all live in the community because of the lack of employment opportunities.

As the smallest chapter in the Navajo Nation, White Rock has a BIA school, chapter house, senior citizens center and a chapter house in their community.

Located in the New Mexico

county of San Juan and 35 miles north of Crownpoint, White Rock Chapter is situated on a dirt road about 5.8 miles off the main highway.

Chapter manager Nancy Brown said the community has traveled a long way in a short amount of time,

bringing electricity to 95 percent of the community.

Brown said, "On Dec. 23, 2010, power was turned on for 23 families. We had some excited

community members who said they had the lights on all night."

White Rock Chapter is now switching gears and focusing their attention on a new waterline

how things used to be.

"Imagine going to work and you have to go to the back of the chapter house and crank up the generator," Brown said. "That's the only way you can go into your office and actually start working."

"You couldn't stand there and say, 'I'm the chapter manager.' Chapter manager or not, you had to have that machine going," she added.

Despite their remote location and diminutive nature, White Rock Chapter is a community filled with growth and a new future.

Information: www.nndcd.org

"Imagine going to work and you have to go to the back of the chapter house and crank up the generator," Brown said.

for the community.

"Our community people still haul water from a great distance and we're really

trying hard on our next project, which will be the waterline," Brown said.

The community's basic infrastructure setup is a far cry from

PACHUG funding connects chapters with the world

Cont. from page 3

"When we first began switching out the old computers with new ones through the Gates Foundation, there were over 400 computers," Willie said.

While the computers were a welcome addition to the chapters, Jordan said the reality of many Navajo communities was finding funding to maintain the systems.

To address this issue, she trains chapter staff to troubleshoot their computers and find free resources that meet their needs.

"It's going to be difficult to

try and service 110 chapters but we do the best we can," Jordan said. "It always feels

good to help our chapters because resources are low and they don't have very many places to go."

Phase II of the PACHUG created seven computer labs on the Navajo Nation, with 10-12 computers at each location.

With the completion of grant funding from the Gates Foundation, NNDCCD continues to seek grants and other funds to sustain these programs that brought chapters into the digital age.

"The next step is to continue working with the chapters. The division has limited resources and we don't have these grants anymore," Nez said.

NNDCCD is working with chapters to transition the support

for the PACHUG devices. The division also continues to assist

"The next step is to continue working with the chapters," Nez said.

chapters with finding free services available on the Internet.

Nez said it's an opportunity for chapters to take responsibil-

ity and ownership of the devices and find funds for upgrades and keep the momentum in the public access effort.

"As long as we can get the chapters connected to the Internet, we have some services available on the web," Nez said. "I guess the term used these days is the cloud."

Through Internet-based, file services, chapters have created websites and email addresses for chapter business.

From the division, the Woven Information Navajo Data System has provided chapters with a robust set of tools and transparency that's unrivaled in the tribal hierarchy.

"We started doing some e-Government applications, which eventually became known as

the WIND System. It's a suite of web applications that work together," Nez said.

The WIND System allows chapters to do budgets online, plan infrastructure and capital improvement projects, share information on Navajo Profiles, and map their communities. It also includes rural addressing, project authorization, project administration and the new SAS Tracker, which tracks SAS packets in real time.

Nez foresees a leap forward in progression once the broadband efforts of Navajo Tribal Utility Authority are finalized.

"Looking forward, with the coming of all this fiber and wireless connectivity, you know the applications are just going to grow," Nez said.



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